



In the Name of Allâh
The Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

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Status of Women in Islam

We find in the glorious Qur'an that Allah created femininity as the opposite of masculinity.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ﴾

"O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female."^[1]

Femininity has signs that clearly distinguish it from masculinity. These signs are either corporal such as menstruation, or psychological, such a woman's natural disposition.

● What is a woman's right in the light of the *Shari'ah* (law) of Islam?

As human beings, women have the right to be educated, nurtured and cared for during childhood. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "Whoever has a daughter who he perfectly refined and educated, and was generous to her with that which Allah generously

[1] Al-Hujurât 49:13.

endowed him with; she will be a shield for him against the Fire.”^[1]

He also said, If a person assumed the guardianship of these girls and he was kind to them, they will serve as a shield for him against the Fire.”^[2]

In another *Hadith*, he said, “And a man who has a slave-girl who he perfectly refined and educated, and then set her free and married her shall have two rewards.”^[3]

When a young woman attains the age of maturity, she has the right to spend her wealth as she chooses and is entitled to express her views freely, as well as the right to abstain from being married off without her consent. In addition to increased rights, she is required to cover herself while also disassociating herself from males who are not her close relatives.

The Muslim woman, as a female, is required to maintain her femininity. She should adorn herself only with female adornments, that is to say, she is forbidden from imitating men. She is also required to neither mix nor be alone with men who are not her close relatives. This has been aided for her, such as the ruling which requires her to pray at the rear of the men's rows while participating in congregational prayer.

[1] Recorded by At-Tabarani in *Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir*, and Al-Khara'iti in *Makarim al-Akhlaq* on the authority of Abdullah bin Mas'ood - may Allah be pleased with him.

[2] Recorded by Al-Bukhari.

[3] Ibid.

The Muslim woman is required to fulfill all of the obligations of the *shari'ah* which Allah has ordained, with certain rulings differing to that of men in some forms of worship. For example, Menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth are from among the special characteristics of woman whereby specific legal (*fiqhi*) rulings exist as a means of easing the burden of religious duties. Similarly, it is due to the relative physiological and psychological weaknesses of women that prevents them from assuming responsibilities that may be considered (physically and psychologically) demanding, such as political leadership and major roles in the judiciary. She is also, generally speaking, exempted from participating in *Jihad*, and her testimony is regarded as half that of a man. However, since she is more compassionate and caring, her right to take care of nursing is given priority over that of a man's.

The fundamental principle is that a woman should take care of her home, her husband and her children. That is why her maintenance is the responsibility of her husband, even if she is rich. Allah says,

﴿الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ﴾

“Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allâh has made one of them to excel the other, and because they spend (to support them) from their means.”^[1]

[1] An-Nisa 4:34.

﴿لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ﴾

"They disobey not, (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allâh, but do that which they are commanded."^[1]

13. We also believe in angels whose names have been specifically mentioned by Allah and His Messenger, such as Jibreel (Gabriel), Mika'il (Michael), Malik - the Keeper of Hell and Isrâfil - the angel responsible for blowing the trumpet mentioned in authentic *Hadiths*.

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^[1] At-Tahreem 66:6.

Chapter 3

Belief in the Books

The divine Books are the Scriptures which Allah revealed to His Messengers as guidance and light so that they could convey them to their people in order to act upon them and attain happiness in this world and the Hereafter. They include all that Allah revealed to any of His Messengers in any language and at any place.

However, it has become a norm among the scholars to use the term 'the Books' in reference to the four known Books: the Psalms, revealed to David; the Torah, revealed to Moses; the Gospels, revealed to Jesus; and the Qur'an, revealed to Muhammad - blessings and peace of Allah be upon them all. The term 'Scriptures' also refers to the other revelations, other than these four, sent from Allah to His Messengers.

There is no doubt that these Books, with the exception of the Qur'an, had been corrupted. As for the Qur'an, Allah has guaranteed it His exclusive protection. That is why changes are found in other Books and not in the Qur'an. Allah says,

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ﴾

"Verily, it is We Who have sent down the Dhikr (i.e. the Qur'ân) and surely, We will guard it (from corruption)."^[1]

My dear sister, know that it is mandatory to believe generally, that Allah revealed Books to His Messengers and Prophets in order to show the truth and to call unto it. Allah says,

﴿لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ﴾

"Indeed We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance (justice) that mankind may keep up justice."^[2]

Allah also says,

﴿كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّنَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي مَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ﴾

"Mankind were one community and Allâh sent Prophets with glad tidings and warnings, and with them He sent down the Scripture in truth to judge between people in

^[1] Al-Hijr 15:9.

^[2] Al-Hadeed 57:25.

matters wherein they differed."^[1]

We must also have a specific belief in the Books that Allah, Himself, has mentioned such as the Psalms, Torah, the Gospels and the Qur'an. Allah says,

﴿إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا التَّوْرَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ يَحْكُمُ بِهَا النَّبِيُّونَ الَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا لِلَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالرَّبَّانِيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَارُ بِمَا اسْتُحْفِظُوا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ....﴾

"Verily, We did send down the Taurât [(Torah) [to Mûsâ (Moses)]] therein was guidance and light, by which the Prophets, who submitted themselves to Allâh's Will, judged for the Jews. And the rabbis and the priests [also judged for the Jews by the Taurât (Torah) after those Prophets], for to them was entrusted the protection of Allâh's Book."^[2]

Allah also says,

﴿نَزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنْزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ﴾

"It is He Who has sent down the Book (the Qur'ân) to you [Muhammad (peace be upon him)] with truth, confirming what came before it. And He sent down the Taurât (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel)."^[3]

^[1] Al-Baqarah 2:213.

^[2] Al-Ma'idah 5:44.

^[3] Aal 'Imrân 3:3.